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THE AUTHORSHIP OF PIERS PLOWMAN.

"Only when we know what is the 'diction, metre and sentence structure' of the original A-text, can we argue with certainty whether these are, or are not, materially different from those of the B-additions, or decide whether B's treatment of the A-text is really inconsistent with unity of authorship."¹ These words argue strongly for a conservative attitude toward the theory of multiple authorship, and if Mr. Chambers is right, as I think he is, in saying that there is "no ground for disturbing the MSS. in so far as Robert the Robber is concerned",² and "that the element of certainty, which is necessary before we can use the 'shifted leaf' theory as a basis on which to build other theories, is wanting",³ the old tradition of a single author seems to be not yet seriously disturbed.

It may, nevertheless, be interesting to attack this question from quite a different point of view. Leaving aside the A1 and A2 theory, which, as far as I know, has been nowhere accepted and with which I have dealt elsewhere,⁴ let us turn to the chief point of the discussion: whether A has or has not written the B-text.

To prove A's authorship of the B-text we must understand the poet's object in writing A2 and the combining idea of all these visions of Dowell, Dobetter and Dobest, which are said to be often without connection and partly even to "defy analytical explanation" (Manly). That may be true in a certain way, and is only too natural a conclusion with those who are strong in criticizing, but unable to put a definite positive truth

¹ R. W. Chambers, T. H. G. Grattan: *The Text of 'Piers Plowman'*. *Modern Language Review*, Vol iv. No. 3. April, 1909.

² R. W. Chambers: *The Authorship of 'Piers Plowman'*. *Mod. Lang. Review*, Vol. v, No. 1, Jan., 1910.

³ *Ibid.*

⁴ *Zeitsch. f. vergl. Literaturgesch.*, XVIII, 10ff.

in the place of the shattered gods. It does not follow, however, that one leading thought is not carried out systematically, though it is very often pushed aside for episodes and details, which for the time being monopolized the whole interest of the author's impetuous nature. What, then, is this leading thought? Here it is: The Visions of Dowell, etc., contain experiences and confessions of the author in autobiographical chronology, where the different periods appear disguised as allegorical figures and following each other from passus to passus in the same order as they had followed each other in the actual life of the author.⁵ This theory may be *a priori* refuted as too far-fetched and altogether too fantastic. But it can be proved⁶ that the author had an astonishing and very accurate knowledge of mediæval psychology, which shows that, apart from the introspective turn of his mind everywhere visible in his poem, he had a decided psychological interest, resting moreover on as sound a scientific basis as was possible in his day. So I think we need not be surprised at his working together into a sort of biography his ethical purposes with his own spiritual and moral development and the personal experiences of his own life.

They appear personified in various allegorical figures, such as Thought, Wit, Imagination, etc. And what do they personify? An allegory, we are told, is a description of a subject under the guise of some other subject of aptly suggestive resemblance (Murray). What subject, then, we ask, is disguised under the figure of Thought? Or whom does Imagination resemble? 'Ymaginatyf' has generally been rather superficially rendered by fancy. But 'Ymaginatyf' means *ars commemorativa* according to Bacon, and Bartholomew Anglicus in his 'De Proprietatibus Rerum' speaks of it as the faculty of seeing things not present and bringing back what lies in the past, so that we

⁵ For a more detailed argument of this theory I must refer to my book: "Charakterentwicklung und ethisch-theologische Anschauungen des Verfassers von *Piers the Plowman*," Leipzig, 1900, on which this article is more or less based.

⁶ Compare my above mentioned article in *Ztsch. f. vergl. Literaturgesch.*

must take 'Ymaginatyf' not only as fancy but above all as a reproductive imagination. But whose fancy is personified in the allegory of 'Ymaginatyf' and whose past is reproduced? I venture to say that to put these questions leads to the inevitable conclusion that it is the author himself who appears under the guise of 'Ymaginatyf', as he does under that of 'Thought', 'Wit', indeed of almost all those various characters which, as I take it, represent different phases of his own life in consecutive order. So then: 'Thought' will reveal *his* thoughts, 'Wit' will give us *his* knowledge, 'Dam Study' will acquaint us with *his* studies, 'Clergy' with *his* experiences when in clerical order, and so forth.

This must be the meaning of the type of allegorical figures used by the individualistic English poet who is able to visualize even the inner workings of the soul. What we have thus found deductively, we shall now have to corroborate and to prove by the contents of the various visions and the explanation they give of Dowell, Dobetter and Dobest.

The poet intends "to seche Dowel",¹ A ix, 2. Naturally he first turns for information to the friars (ibid. 8ff.), famous for their learning and knowledge; but since he cannot "conceyve" their words he falls back on his own thoughts, reflecting on what he heard and experienced, dreaming and sleeping. 'Thought' addresses him first, A, ix, 61ff. The author himself states in plain words that 'Thought' is identical with his own personality, describing him as "a much mon, lyk to my-selven", and to his question who he is, he gets the appropriate answer "that thou wost wel and no wijt betere", and "I haue suwed the this seven yer, seze thou me no rathere." So this is evidently only a dialogue between the poet and himself. Accordingly the explanation of the meaning of Dowell, etc. here given can contain nothing but what we must expect: the conventional opinion of any average man in those days, therefore also of the author at some time of his life and certainly in his

¹ I cite from *Piers the Plowman in three parallel texts*, ed. W. W. Skeat, Oxf., 1886.

childhood. It is the threefold standard of life as universally accepted in mediaeval christianity: Dowell is the active life of the honest labourer; Dobetter the charitable life of a man in religious orders; Dobest that of a bishop.

Agreeing that 'Thought' can only mean the author himself, and that the explanation of Dowell, etc. must have been once accepted by him, at least when a child, let us pass on to the next vision, that of 'Wit', A ix, 109ff. 'Wit', he says, a man gets "whon he childhode passeth", x, 73, and that he and 'Thought' met with 'Wit', "er we weoren war", ix, 109, and that he came from 'Thought' to 'Wit', being covetous of "more kynde knowynge", ix, 103. These quotations show that in this vision we have to expect a development of 'Thought', equal to "I" and to the author, after he passed childhood, getting wit and becoming a young man, perhaps, ix, 110ff:

long and lene. to loken on ful symple,

Was no pride on his apparail. ne no pouert nother,
not yet quite sure of himself, ix, 113:

I durste mene no mateere. to make him to jangle,
but already instinctively desirous, ix, 115:

To putte forth sum purpos. to preuen his wittes —

undoubtedly a very fitting description of a youngster developing into mature age. That we are right in assuming that this vision of 'Wit' covers the poet's period of life as a young scholar is further proved by the wisdom 'Wit' puts forth in x, 1ff: First elements of authropology, as we should call it nowadays, and of physics and ethics, which, as we know,⁸ were taught in the mediaeval grammar schools or in the grammar faculty at or before the beginning of the *trivium*, to give the first schooling in Latin and in logical thinking. Besides, the first line of a latin distich, x, 95, "cum recte vivas, ne cures verba malorum", found in the collection of moral maxims used in mediaeval schools,⁹ and the amusing exegesis of x, 86, "virga tua et baculus

⁸ For instance, Blakiston's essay in Traill: *Social England*, ii. 90.

⁹ Bernh. Pez: *Thesaur. Anecd. noviss.* iii. 2. 487.

tuus ipsa me consolata sunt (thy rod and thy staff comfort me) as meaning, being beaten with “ȝerdes” “maketh men meoke and mylde of heore specke” and “alle kunne scolers in scoles forte lerne”,—such passages can leave no doubt that school reminiscences are interwoven into this vision, as also into the curious explanation of Dowell, etc. given by ‘Wit’, so utterly different from that given by ‘Thought’, x, 211-213:

Thenne is Dowel to dredren. and Dobet to suffren
And so cometh Dobest aboute. and bringeth aboun modi
And that is wikkede Wil. that mony werke schendeth.

The “betynge of ȝerdes” in x, 85 and this high valuation of “dredren” and “suffren” may perhaps recall the mediaeval custom of conferring the degrees of the grammar school or faculty “by the grant of a rod and a birch” and that the first act of every new Master of Grammar was to beat “openly in the school’s a shrewd boy.”¹⁰ From all this we may be justified in taking the allegorical figure of ‘Wit’ as personifying the experiences which the poet had while a young scholar in the grammar school or faculty.

From ‘Wit’ we pass straight on to the next vision, that of ‘Dam Study’, A xi, 1ff. We are not obliged to walk a long distance, passing by all sorts of places and sideroads as we generally do when we go with the poet. This time he simply says: “Thenne hedde Wit a wyf,” and since we were just talking to ‘Wit’ we naturally are also in presence of his inseparable wife. This is quite in accordance with actual conditions, and that the poet leads us on just in this manner seems again to strengthen our argument. For he acquired wit in the grammar course which in England was an independent faculty, though, on the other hand, in close connection with the *studium generale* and part of the course in the seven arts.¹¹ So listening to ‘Wit’s’ grammar and moral advice he also had to do with ‘Dam Study’, his less obliging wife.

¹⁰ H. C. Maxwell Lyte: A Hist. of the Univ. of Oxford. London, 1886, p. 235.

¹¹ Among others in Carl Ad. Schmid: Gesch. d. Erziehung. Stuttg. 1884, ii. 1. p. 397.

She is very hard on the shy young scholar and generalizing, as women are said sometimes to do, counts him at first sight among "fayturs or fooles that frentik ben of wittes", xi, 6. She jumps at conclusions, taking it for granted that 'Wit' introduced him to different theological problems then in vogue in English universities and that he, the little student of grammar, did not of course, care a bit about wisdom, xi, 17, but that he, too, belonged to that great number of students who valued knowledge only so far as it could be turned into money and earthly welfare, xi, 13 ff. How does madame know all this? How can she say xi, 3, "Wit me thus tauhte"? For "thus" cannot refer to what the young man had actually learnt from 'Wit', that infants must be educated to self-responsibility, to have "wys understandinge", x, 71, and to know, what many people do not know, that by Dowel and Dobetter they may overcome "wekkide Wil that mony werke schendeth," x, 213. Surely this advice, purely moral and for anybody most necessary, she cannot mean when she grumbles with her husband that he "me thus tauhte." What she does mean and what she really aims at is to be inferred from *her own* words in which she complains of the frivolous turn studies have taken of late and of the materialistic tendency among the scholars. There was no allusion, however, to this in 'Wit's' words, and so we feel inclined to say that 'Dam Study' did not listen properly and attacks what she *thought* 'Wit' said or that she is not very accurate in her statements and joins to her other qualities that of being illogical. But it is not she who is illogical, it is a man this time, the author. He cannot speak and write systematically. He presupposes that we, the readers, also know what he knows about the conditions of learning at the colleges and halls in his days and refers with his little illogical "thus" not to what he actually had said and related, but to what he felt and experienced when he first came in touch with studies and scholars. We thank him this time, if not always, for the unsystematic bent of his nature. For he thus proves to us that here again we have a piece of autobiography, the poet's own *studium*

generale personified in the allegorical figure of 'Dam Study'.

We can well understand that the young fellow with his ardent desire for knowledge and right conduct was very much surprised at what he saw in academic life. He had hoped to learn wisdom there, and now he finds "clerks and kete men", xi, 56, disputing the gospel, applying their logical witticisms to the most holy dogmas of the church—"fyndeth forth fantasies ur feith to apeyre," xi, 63,—and cracking jokes at the most venerated stories of the bible—"telleth of the trinite hou two slown the thridde," xi, 40,—whilst an earnest man "that holy writ hath ever in his mouthe and con . . . prechen of the penance . . . luytel is he loved." We quite agree now with the author that it is not wise—to use 'Dam Study's reproachful terms—"wisdom to telle, to fayturs or to fooles that frentik ben of wittes", xi, 5ff, and "with such wyse words to wisse ony fooles," *ibid.* 8. But the poet vows that he will be different, saying to Dam Study':

joure mon schal I worthe

To worchen joure wille. while my lyf dureth;

Kenne me kuyndely. to knowen what is Dowel, xi, 100ff.

'Dam Study' therefore recommends him to her "cosyn that Clergye is i-hoten" and his wife "that Scripture is i-nempnet", xi, 104ff., and tells him "the heiȝe wey wher Clergye dwelleth", xi, 111. This time it is a long journey "from hennes to soffrebothe-wele-and-wo"; and he must "ryd forth bi Richesse" and "eke the longe launde that Lecherie hette", etc., etc., xi, 113-122. That is very remarkable. There is a distinction made between study and clergy. How is this since all studies were clerical or at least called so? And how is it that only now we hear of something like the monastic vows? Generally we assume that from the beginning the young scholar belonged to some sort of clerical institution and so, in a way, to a religious order, received the tonsure and was under certain rules resembling those of the monks and the regular clergy, though not so strict as these. But our attention has been drawn to

some manuscript illuminations from which we gather the fact that the pupils of the faculty of grammar "had not been admitted to the tonsure",¹² and since the shearing of the tonsure was the very first thing done to a man entering clerical orders, he could only *after* this performance commence to be obedient to the monastic rules. We therefore must admit that here again all that our poet says very accurately agrees with the curriculum of a mediaeval university. At first he seems to have been a pupil in the faculty of grammar "accounted the first of the seven liberal arts" but "at best an inferior faculty",¹³ belonging, however, to the *studium generale*. After that he took the tonsure, and thereby submitted to regulations more or less monastic in character—to be honourable, chaste, peaceable, humble, teachable, and anxious for improvement; and so he becomes now a clericus, as 'Dam Study' said: "so shalt thou come to Clergye," xi, 123.

The young man evidently was very happy that he had come thus far. Still in later years he gives vent to this joy in the beautiful lines, xi, 109-110:

Thenne was I as fayn. as foul on feir morwen
Gladdore then the gleo-mon is, of his grete ȝiftes.

And so he began to study the seven arts, as we rightly infer from what we have heard of his life so far. Our conclusion is correct, for in the following lines he gives an account of them. This account is evidently taken from personal experience. He does not cite the official names of the subjects treated: *trivium* (grammar, logic, rhetoric), *quadrivium* (music, arithmetic, geometry, astronomy), and the three philosophies (physics, metaphysics and ethics), but he names them very differently, xi, 127ff:

Lo! logyk I lered hire. and at the lawe after,
And alle musons in musyk. I made hire to knowe
Plato the poyete. I put him furste to boke,

¹² Lyte: Hist. of Oxf., p. 234.

¹³ *Ibid.*

Aristotle and other mo. to arguen I tauhte;
 Gramer for gurles. I gon furste to write,
 And beot hem with a baleys. but ȝif thei wolde lernen, etc.

Why does he mention logic first instead of grammar? It is for a very good reason. Logic, the all prevailing logic, was the real subject taught in the grammar lectures. "Grammar properly speaking was hardly touched upon," especially at Oxford, "where logical disputations, more and more, took the place of the training in Latin grammar",¹⁴ and what should have been the object of the faculty of grammar¹⁵ was sometimes so entirely left aside that, for instance, at Vienna a statute of 1429 tried to force the regent masters "to carry out their lectures for grammatical and not for metaphysical and logical purposes."¹⁶ So the author very appropriately calls grammar logic.

With equal right he speaks of "lawe" instead of rhetoric. For under the headmark of rhetoric "the elements of Roman law were often added and all schoolboys were exercised in writing prose and what passed for verse"¹⁷ and in learning *ars dictaminis*, *modus epistolandi* and those formulas used in chancery courts,¹⁸ called *dictamen prosaicum* i.e. to draw up letters and documents for judicial and other purposes;¹⁹ so that one feels inclined to think that very often the courses in rhetoric only embraced exercises in *dictamen* and the reading of legal decisions,²⁰ in short taught the forensic terminology or "lawe."

The poet inserts "musyk", which belonged to the *quadrivium*, because music was practised from beginning through-

¹⁴ Schmid: ii, 1, p. 440.

¹⁵ Cf. Alexander de Villa Dei's *Doctrinale*.

¹⁶ Schmid: *ibid.*

¹⁷ Hastings Rashdall: *The Universities of Europe in the Middle Ages*. Oxf., 1847, I, p. 36.

¹⁸ Schmid: *ibid.* p. 441.

¹⁹ F. A. Specht: *Geschichte des Unterrichtswesens in Deutschland bis zum. 13 Jahrh.* Stuttgart. 1885, p. 117.

²⁰ *Ibid.* p. 120.

out the whole education, and adds "Plato the poyete" since poetry, as we have just heard, belonged to rhetoric or law.

"Aristotle" he says instead of logic. This is obvious since Aristotle ruled supreme in logic with his writings comprehended under the titles of *ars* or *logica vetus* and *logica nova*.²¹ Here the pupil learnt to argue on sophisms and to discuss *pro* and *contra*²² so that "Aristotle to arguen" is also a very well chosen term for the training the pupils received in the courses of logic.

Then grammar is added but as necessary for "gurles" who get beaten "but jif thei wolde lernen."

As to the *quadrivium* and the three philosophies he speaks, xi, 152 ff., of the very little value then attributed to them at Oxford, where they gave seven weeks to geometry and three to arithmetic,²³ and science he calls "nigromancye" with which men like Roger Bacon and Bishop Grosseteste had been charged.²⁴

"Bote Teologye hath teoned me" he begins, xi, 136ff, and we readily believe him. It was mere scholastic philosophy, barren ground, purely speculative,—“the more I muse thereon, the mistiloker it semeth.” It began to separate itself from the new spirit of life poured into mediaeval philosophy by the genius of William Occam, and it vainly tried to hold its own with its obsolete terminology, proved void and meaningless by the new theory of perception of the great English nominalist, who clearly said that theology is no science, since science has to do with what we know and not what is. So our author accurately states the estimation in which theology was held when he says: "Hit is no science forsothe." Had it not been combined with Aristotle's ethics,²⁵ teaching happiness as the natural consequence

²¹ Rashdall, *ibid.* p. 37. Schmid, *ibid.* p. 441.

²² Lyte: *ibid.* p. 205 and p. 226.

²³ Schmid, *ibid.* p. 448.

²⁴ Lyte, *ibid.* p. 57.

²⁵ Schmid, *ibid.* p. 443.

of virtue—"neore the loue that lyth therinne a lewed thing hit weore," xi, 140.

May I venture to say that it is highly probable that in these lines about the seven arts and the three philosophies the poet refers to his own studies and that we have good reason to take also this part of his poem as autobiographical, 'Dam Study' representing his own personal experience—being in fact almost a personification of himself as a scholar at the *studium generale*?

From 'Dam Study' he proceeds to 'Clergy', "the goode mon", and 'Scripture', "his wyf", xi, 166ff. The poet distinguishes between study, clergy and scripture. Scripture is learning and scholarship as taught by the *studium generale*, therefore "sib to the seuen ars", xi, 106, and is closely related to clergy, representing clerical skill and learning as a preparation to and part of the clerical state and order,—clergy, properly speaking. This distinction leads us to assume that the author, having finished the preliminary arts course, and having reached mastership in the seven arts and the three philosophies, was now permitted to read for his theological degree. The contents of this vision proves that we are not mistaken.

He is kindly welcomed by clergy and scripture "so sone as heo wuste, that I was of Wittes hous and with his wif Dam Studie," xi, 172. Indeed this welcome must have been a most hearty one leaving a very pleasant memory still in later years, xi, 170:

Was neuer gome upon grounde. seththen god made heuene
Feiroke vndurfonge. no friendloker maad at ese.

It is, therefore, the more astonishing that we find very soon a serious disagreement between him and Clergy and Scripture, and it seems noteworthy that this discussion begins in Clergy's words. 'Clergy' first gives the conventional explanation of Dowell, etc., continues by severely criticizing some members of the religious orders, and finishes up in giving a very different meaning to Dowell, etc. At first in xi, 179ff., he said that Dowell was *vita activa*, Dobetter living in charity, and Dobest to be prince over God's people, and now he says:

I wende that kinghed and kniȝthed. and caiseris with erlis
Wern Do-wel and Do-bet. and Do-best of hem alle, xi. 216.^a

For this 'Clergy' is attacked by 'Scripture' who says that "kinghed and kniȝthod helpith nouȝt to heuene", xi, 212, and that poor people will easier go to heaven than rich. Against this the poet finds an argument in the words of the Bible, "qui crediderit et baptizatus fuerit saluus erit," xi, 229. But 'Scripture' answers that this does not follow in all cases and that also a Christian may go to hell "for his misdede", xi, 249.—This makes the poet very angry and now he breaks forth, xi, 250:

ȝet am I neuere the ner. for nouȝt I have walkid
To wyte what is Do-wel. witterly in herte
For how I worke in this world. wrong other ellis
I was markid withoute mercy. and myn name entrid
In the legende of lif. longe er I were.

Everything is ruled by predestination. It is quite useless and unimportant for him to know what is Dowell and without consequence for the future what a life he tries to lead in this world.

This sounds most extraordinary! What a curious answer to give when we justly expect now that the poem is drawing to an end to get from 'Clergy' or 'Scripture' a definite definition of Dowell, etc. Instead of which, 'Clergy' disagrees with himself, is rebuked by 'Scripture', and the poet tells them both that they know nothing about it and gives a slashing theological refutation of their arguments, based upon an heretical conception of the dogma of predestination. It is hard to understand this vision unless we take it strictly biographically as referring to the religious problems which our poet had to face at this period of his academical career, problems which his common sense found very difficult of solution. This position we think is confirmed by the restless questioning tone and the excited dialogue in this passus which evidently carry the stamp of a personal ex-

^a Perhaps these and the following lines—220 in the original—were not meant to contain 'Clergy's' words, but that would not affect the rest of the argument.

perience and clearly represent the *debate* of a man at odds with himself, full of doubts and uncertain of his attitude towards the authority which offers a solution. So we take it: 'Clergy' stands for the author's clerical life while reading for his theological degree, and comprises the clerical world around him and himself as a member of a clerical order and a student of clerical doctrine, which he first repeats as far as it answered to his question about Dowell, etc., and which he then refutes by bringing up the argument:

Super cathedram Moisi sederunt principes

For-thi I wende that tho wyse, wern Dobest of alie! xi, 219, and through 'Scripture', that is his knowledge of theological doctrine, he gives such a turn to his argument that it leads to the dogma of predestination, which since the days of Occam once more puzzled many an honest and religious heart in England and evidently also was the stumbling block in the theological development of our author. Finding a flaw in one of the dogmas of Holy Church he turns against the clergy in general, depreciating with youthful rashness all their teachings as worthless, misleading wisdom. "Ecce ipsi ydioti," he says, "rapiunt celum, ubi nos sapientes in infernum mergemur," xi, 295.

How are we to account for such an incongruity between the beginning and the end of this vision? There he praised 'Clergy' and his wife in the highest terms, with words full of love and admiration, sure of learning from them "Dowel and Dobest and seththen afturward to seo sumwhat of Dobest", xi, 175; and here, only a few lines later, he contradicts and condemns all that 'Clergy' says and even regrets that he ever took the trouble of seeing him, xi, 250ff. And all this under the heading: What is Dowell? Surely, the only possible explanation here as in the rest of these visions is that the author relates experiences of his own life, evidently with the intention, as we now understand, to explain to others and very likely to himself why he does not accept the three-fold ethical ideal taught by the church and how he came to think so lightly of Clergy's teaching.

The last passus of the A-text unfortunately is very obscure, but this much we may certainly gather from it that the author's hope and intention was no more with 'Clergy's aid to find the right way to Dowell, etc. He withdraws from 'Clergy', and 'Clergy':

in-to a caban. crepte anon after
And drow the dore after him. and bad me go Dowe!,
Or wycke, jif I wolde. whether me lyked, xii, 35ff.

'Scripture', however, remained his friend, though at first she seemed to side with 'Clergy'. But when she saw that the poet was in earnest to give his life to her, with her help to find 'Kynde Wit', xii, 41, she showed him to "omnia probate" who would bring him to "quod bonum est tenete", where in the home of 'Kynde Wit' he would learn what is Dowell, xii, 50ff.

So this is what his life has come to so far: Disappointed with Clergy and unsatisfied with his teachings he thinks that earnest study and investigation will give his intelligence that common sense which will help him to do well so far as that is possible "while his lyf and lykhamen lesten togedere", xii, 93, and according to his well doing here will be his mirth in "paradys with aungels", xii, 94ff.

The important question is now if we are entitled to take B xi ff. as the sequence of his leading thought found so far in A ix-xii, or in other words, if these confessions of the author are continued in B xi. This would show that the author of the A-text and the author of the B-text are one and the same person.

In B x, 115 we read the curious line:

Ymaginatyf her-afterward. shal answer to þowre purpos,
and in B xi, 400-xii, 293 'Ymaginatyf',—"the faculty of seeing things not present and bringing back what lies in the past" as we have heard,—does answer this "purpos" and many others contained in B but mostly taken over into B from A. This can be clearly seen by comparing the vision with 'Ymaginatyf' with the arguments discussed in A xi.

The purport of these arguments in A was to show on how unsound and unreliable a basis the doctrines of the church and the teachings of the clergy stand, and that people would be much surer of their salvation without them. 'Ymaginatyf' now in B xi, 400ff. answers to this, not as in the A-text, laying all the blame on the clergy, but blaming the poet himself! He prided himself, says 'Ymaginatyf', on his knowledge, and presumptuously asked "after the whyes", xii, 217 and "aresonedest Resoun, a rebukying as it were", xii, 218, so that 'Clergy' did not care any more for his company, xi, 414 (cf. A xii, 35ff.). He thought that his 'Kinde Wit' alone would suffice that one day his "play be plenteuous in paradys with aungelys", A xii, 95, and now he must understand that:

Namore kan a kynde-witted man. but clerkes hym teche
Come for al his kynde witte. to Crystendome and be saued,
B xii, 109ff.

and that "letterure" may lead "lewed men to resoun", B xii, 106, for "Clergye is kepere under Cryst heuene", B xii, 128. Therefore we are counseled, B xii, 123:

no clergie to dispise

Ne sette schort be here science. what so thei don hemselue.
For he B xii, 172:

that knoweth clergie. can sonner aryse
Out of synne and be sauf. though he synne ofte
If hym lyketh and lest, than any lewed lelly.

And this holds true though 'Clergy' may not be able to explain all and may sometimes be averse to answer the questions put to him by such who ask "after the whyes". If he asks why Solomon the Sage and Aristotle are not in heaven "and al holy chirche holden hem in helle" A xi, 263, one must answer B xii, 268ff:

And where he [Aristoteles] be sauf or nouȝt sauf. the sothe wote
no clergie
He of Sortes ne of Salamon. no scripture can telle.
Ac god is so good, I hope

That god for his grace. gyue her soules reste.

And so it is with many other problems that used to puzzle him, why this and why that, why Adam's fall A xi, 66, about which

Lewed men many times. maistres thei apposen, B xii, 232.

And why, A xi, 271:

A goode Friday (I fynde), a feloun was sauid

That hadde lyued al his lyf. with lesinges and theftis,

or in B xii, 214:

why that one thef on the crosse. creaunt hym ȝelt

Rather than that other thef

and why A xi, 295:

ipsi ydioti rapiunt celum ubi nos sapientes in infernum mergemur,

or in B xii, 158:

How that lewed men listloker. than lettred were saued,

to all these "why's" one has to answer:

Alle the clerkes vnder Cryst. ne couthe the skil assoille

B xii, 216,

but "Kynde knoweth," and if he had not been so rash in his arguments and conclusions he might have known this long ago.

For Resoun wolde haue reherced the. riȝte as Clergye saide

Ac for thine entermetyng. here artow forsake.

* * * * *

That Clergye thi compaignye ne kepeth nouȝt to sue,

B xi, 405.

Now this is evidently a refutation of the arguments brought forward against 'Clergy' in A x i. If it were given quite objectively one might perhaps argue the point that B repeats A's words only with the intention to disprove his heretical and almost blasphemous retorts afterwards. But what 'Ymaginatyf' answers to such "purpose" is not a logical repetition, dictated by cold reasoning, as we should expect if B has nothing to do with such heresies personally. 'Ymaginatyf's reproaches and remonstrances are born from shame and remorse, B xi, 426:

There smit no thinge so smerte. ne smelleth so soure

As shame.

He is *ashamed* of the "pruide" and "presumpeioun", B xi, 413 and the "rude speche", B xi, 410 with which he opposed 'Clergy'. *Ashamed*, however, he can only be if he, B, has done himself what he relates and not if he simply repeats what he found in a MS. written by somebody else. "That Clergye thi compaignye ne kepeth nouȝt to sue" in B xi, 414 undoubtedly points to "Clergie into a caban crepte. . . and bad me go Dowel or wycke, ȝif I wolde, whether me lyked" in A xii, 35ff. He who is ashamed of this in B can be nobody but he who did it in A and can be nobody but the author himself who says:

Tho cauȝte I coloure anon. and comsed to ben aschamed,

B xi, 395,

who is blamed in B xii, 16 for meddling himself with "mak-ynges" and who excuses himself:

Ac if there were any wight. that wolde me telle

What were Dowel and Dobet. and Dobest atte laste

Wolde I neuere do werke. but wende to holicherche,

And there bydee my bedes. but whan ich eet or slepe.

B xii, 26ff.

This, I hope, will fairly prove that the A-text and the B-text are by the same author. B xi ff. may, therefore, be taken as containing the continuance of the author's confessions in the A-text. In the same manner in which we have done it for A ix-xii we can trace in B xi ff. the gradual development of the author's character through many different phases, a matter which will be the subject of another article.

OTTO MENSENDIECK.

Bonn, Germany.